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**ADVANTAGES OF STANDARDS**  
**FOR**  
**LIVESTOCK AND MEATS**

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tained a certain degree of maturity. Similarly, standards have been set up for bulls, ewes, sows, boars, and some of the other major groups into which livestock is sorted in the process of marketing.

The same is true with respect to meats. Steer beef is beef derived from the slaughter and dressing of a steer and can not be produced by any other animal. The standards for these groups have been so generally accepted and so well established that everyone understands them, and there is no confusion or misunderstanding when any of these group names are used.

There are other market groups, however, regarding which this is not true. Take, for example, the term "calf." What is a calf? How old should it be, what weight limitations, if any, should be specified, and what other characteristics or requirements should be set down in defining a calf? Experience has shown that opinions differ rather widely regarding just what should be called a "calf."

Much the same is true of the term "lamb." Just what is a lamb, and when does a lamb become a yearling or a sheep? What are the requirements for a lamb? What standard has been set up for determining, in all instances, whether an animal is a lamb or a sheep?

Consider the term "lightweight" as applied to hogs. What is a lightweight hog? Is there any definite, well-established standard for a lightweight hog? Presumably inquiry would reveal a difference of opinion between swine producers, packers, retail butchers, and others. It is possible that the same man might designate the same type of hog differently at different times and under different circumstances. He might not set precisely the same weight limitations for lightweight hogs at one season of the year that he does at another.

What is a "good" grade steer? Investigation would probably reveal still greater differences of opinion. The question as to whether a man was a buyer or seller might influence his requirements for a good grade steer. Supply and demand conditions prevailing at the moment might have a bearing. This means that no sharply defined and generally accepted standard for a "good" grade steer has yet been established, and in the absence of such a standard, opinions differ regarding what constitutes a "good" grade steer.

If opinions differ regarding the length of a stick of wood, the true length can be established beyond question, because standards for different units of lineal measurement have been set up. These standards have been accepted and possess the authority of usage and Government sanction. A standard yardstick is kept in the Bureau of Standards in Washington, and anything which purports to be a yard long must match this standard in length. Much the same is true of standards of weight. There is a standard ounce, pound, ton, etc. With such standards available it is a simple matter to determine whether an object weighs 10 ounces, or 2 pounds, or a ton.

In the case of livestock and meat no such situation prevails. Hence there has always been considerable confusion, misunderstanding, and economic waste involved in moving these commodities through commerce.

If a stockman says he has a load of "choice" grade steers to sell, the packer thinks, "Perhaps he has, and perhaps he has not. I must first see the steers, because I don't know what that stockman means by 'choice.' He may have in mind the same thing I have, and he



may not." So the packer must go out into the stockyard, or 100 miles down in the country, to inspect the load of steers. Or the stockman must ship his steers to the packer without having any assurance that they will prove to be what the packer wants.

A New York retail butcher wants a "good" grade carcass of steer beef. The packer in Chicago has half a dozen coolers filled with beef, but he does not know whether any of these carcasses will meet the New York butcher's conception of a "good" grade carcass. Consequently he ships a carload of assorted carcasses from Chicago to New York, where he maintains a branch house with expensive equipment in which to hold the beef until the retailer finds it convenient to come and inspect it. The retail butcher leaves his shop, travels across the city, looks over the beef, and finally selects the carcass which meets his requirements, provided such a carcass is included in the display. All this is necessitated by the fact that until recently there have been no well-established, generally accepted, and authoritative standards for a "good" grade slaughter steer or a "good grade steer carcass."

### BASIS OF STANDARDS FOR LIVESTOCK AND MEATS

In setting up standards for meat animals and dressed carcasses, the United States Department of Agriculture has made an effort to select as the basis for such standards those things which observation and the experience of the industry have shown are vital; are always present; are inherent in the animal and its carcass and therefore not subject to sudden or material changes; and, finally, those things which can be detected and appraised readily, quickly, and accurately. Furthermore, effort has been made to make the standards as simple and readily understandable as possible. With that in mind, all grade factors have been reduced to three—conformation, finish, and quality.

#### CONFORMATION

Conformation is the shape, build, outline, or contour of the animal or carcass. It is a matter of physical measurements. It must not be assumed, however, that the largest animal or carcass possesses the highest degree of conformation. It is a question of proportion and not of size. For example, to rank high in conformation the depth of an animal's body must maintain a certain ratio or proportion to its length and thickness. Hence, as a rule, the animal or carcass which shows the best proportions possesses the highest degree of conformation.

#### FINISH

Finish is fat. It involves not only the quantity of fat but also the character, quality, and distribution of the fat. An animal or carcass, to rank high in finish, must possess an approved proportion of fat to lean, and the fat must be of high quality and must be smooth and evenly distributed within the limits set by nature.

#### QUALITY

Quality is perhaps the most comprehensive of all the grade factors and the most difficult to define. It is largely a characteristic of the

flesh of the animal and involves tenderness, juiciness, flavor, texture, and marbling. It also involves the proportion of flesh to bone. To rank high in quality an animal or carcass must possess a high proportion of flesh to the amount of bone it carries, and that flesh must possess a high degree of tenderness, juiciness, and flavor.

The same factors are used as the basis for standards for livestock as for dressed meat carcasses. This procedure simplifies matters greatly, for once the factors, and methods of measuring them are learned, virtually the same system of grading can be applied to both live animals and their dressed carcasses. In some instances, different methods of detecting or measuring the various factors are used, but the factors themselves are the same, and when properly appraised, they produce the same results.

These characteristics or factors have always been used to determine relative excellence, desirability, and value in both livestock and meats. Every stockman, livestock judge, meat expert, and cooler man, in attempting to appraise the desirability or worth of an animal or carcass notes the conformation, the amount and character of finish, and the quality. The breeder, feeder, slaughterer, retail meat dealer, and even the consumer, base their judgments on these same characteristics. Hence, the United States standards are based on things which trade practice and the experience of the industry have shown are sound and valid.

All of these factors are always present, for each meat animal or carcass possesses each of them in some degree. The degrees possessed not only determine the grade but also constitute the real differences between some of the other market groups, such as classes, subclasses, age, and use selections.

These factors are inherent in the animal and its carcass and at any given time can not be changed. They exist independently of time, place, season, or any like consideration. In the live animal all three frequently may be changed by additional feeding, altered environment, and by other means, but at the moment the degree of each factor is fixed, and the animal can be judged or graded on that basis. In the case of a carcass the grade factors can not be changed.

Each of these factors can be detected and appraised readily, quickly, and accurately. To the uninitiated this does not seem possible, but observation and experience on the great livestock and meat markets of the country provide abundant proof that it is true. In the daily transactions which occur on any important livestock market many thousands of animals change ownership within a few hours. Millions of dollars are frequently involved in these transactions. To conduct such a volume of business in the time available appraisals must be made quickly, and to keep those engaged in the business out of bankruptcy they must be made accurately. An accomplished fact needs no argument.

The application of these factors in the formulation of grade standards may be illustrated by a single factor, such as conformation. Nature provides upper and lower limits of conformation beyond which, generally speaking, it is impossible to go. At one extreme is found the plumpest, smoothest, finest-proportioned animal of which one can conceive, and at the other, the roughest, thinnest, most ill-proportioned and emaciated animal in which it is possible to main-



tain life. Between these two extremes is included every possible degree of conformation.

By dividing this range into units of equal width, corresponding in number with the previously determined number of grades, the upper and lower limits of conformation covered by each grade are established. Hence, there is prime conformation, choice conformation, good conformation, etc., each covering the same number of degrees but occupying different positions in the scale. Fixed or standardized limits are set up for each of these units of conformation.

The same procedure is followed with respect to finish and with respect to quality.

Grade is not based on one factor, however, but on a combination of the three. Seldom, if ever, does an animal or carcass possess the same degree of conformation, of finish, and of quality. For instance, it may rank higher in conformity than in finish or lower in quality than in conformation. An almost infinite number of combinations of the factors is possible. In determining the grade, factors are balanced, and the grade in which the animal or carcass is finally placed depends upon the resultant of this balancing or on the play of the three grade factors on each other.

This may be illustrated by the course of a bullet, which is the resultant of the play of several forces—the charge of explosive, the force of gravity, and the velocity and direction of the wind—some of which operate in opposite directions.

So, in grading, theoretically, an animal might possess choice conformation, good finish, and medium quality. In that case the final grade would be an average of the three—or “good.” Such a situation might never actually occur. A more common combination would be one in which conformation is near the upper limit of “good” grade, finish near the middle, and quality near the bottom. This would place the animal near the middle of “good” grade. All factors need not fall within the same grade. For example, an animal whose conformation falls near the lower limit of choice, whose finish is near the top of good, and whose quality is near the middle of good would grade somewhere in the upper third of “good” grade.

A point to be remembered is that the average or resultant of the three factors determines not only the grade in which the animal or carcass should be placed but also its position within the grade.

Hence, United States grade standards are not only based on the experience-tested factors of conformation, finish, and quality but they provide a system of measurement whereby these factors may be accurately gauged. By the use of such standards it is possible to see an animal or carcass precisely as it is with respect to conformation, finish, and quality, and to determine its true worth in terms of those characteristics.

## STANDARDS AND THE LIVESTOCK PRODUCER

The livestock producer stands at the beginning of a long chain of events which terminates when the meat finally reaches the consumer's plate. He functions under many natural and inevitable handicaps. In a very real sense he is a speculator in futures. In many instances he begins producing to-day for a market he hopes will

develop 10 years hence. Surrounded by a thousand limitations over which he has little or no control, he must produce something which will be acceptable to a consumer he has never met; with whose circumstances, likes, and dislikes he is largely unfamiliar, and who lives anywhere from 3 to 3,000 miles away. Furthermore, the route between him and that consumer frequently is circuitous and is maintained through the ministrations of a host of intervening agencies.

Of the many needs of the stockman, three stand out: (1) More complete information regarding the needs and preferences of his ultimate market—the meat consumer; (2) a better understanding of the methods, practices, and prices prevailing on his primary markets—the stockyards; and (3) a broader knowledge of basic economic conditions affecting the livestock and meat industries.

Fixed universal standards and a standardized trade language will materially assist the stockman in attaining all of these things. Through the medium of a common trade language the contact between producer and consumer is rendered much more direct and definite, and facilities are provided for a prompt and clear exchange of ideas. Thus the producer is enabled to know quickly and accurately just what the consumer needs, and at the same time he can inform the consumer regarding the things he has to sell.

Such information is of the utmost value to the livestock producer. It serves to explain for him many things occurring on the livestock markets which otherwise would be unintelligible. The meat consumer is the source of the money distributed among the many branches of the livestock and meat industries, and in the long run prices prevailing on the livestock markets are largely dependent on what the consumer will pay for meat. Full information enables the producer to conduct his operations more intelligently and to maintain a better adjustment between production and consumer wants both with respect to quantities and grades. Unless the producer can gain a fair knowledge of at least the general trend of consumer demands he is almost certain to produce too much or too little or to produce the class and grades for which there is small demand and neglect those things for which the consumer will pay the best prices.

The producer, therefore, should maintain constant contact with the livestock market, possess a thorough understanding of the intricate stockyards machinery, and keep himself constantly informed regarding supply and demand conditions and prevailing prices.

The numerous agencies for supplying the stockman with such information—the market reporter, livestock paper, commission man, stockyard company, telephone, telegraph, radio, and the mails—can not give him the best service without uniform, fixed standards. Unless the stockman and his informants use and understand a common, standardized trade language the stockman will not only fail to keep posted on the livestock market, but may easily gain, through his misinterpretation of reports, an erroneous idea of what is happening there.

That a broad knowledge of general economic conditions is a prerequisite to intelligent and profitable livestock production is coming to be recognized by an increasing number of stockmen. That livestock and meat prices are not essentially matters of chance, but that they constitute inevitable results from definite and, in some instances,



controllable causes, and that such prices, over a period of time, follow rather well-defined cycles, are matters which have been demonstrated and are now accepted by progressive stockmen everywhere.

A wide-awake livestock producer now recognizes that the price which he receives for his livestock depends largely on many things far removed both in time and space from the particular market he is using. He has learned that the price depends not solely on the number of animals offered on his market, but on the offerings available at that time on the markets of the country; not solely on supply and demand conditions prevailing at the moment, but also on the number of animals which have been marketed during the recent past, the quantities of meat in storage, and on the numbers of livestock in the country which are likely to be marketed in the near future. A vast amount of information regarding these matters usually exists, but to make it available to the livestock producer there must be definite, fixed standards and a standardized trade language with which to describe supply, demand, and price conditions—past, present, and prospective.

In conclusion, then, universal standards and a standardized nomenclature will assist the livestock producer by making it possible for him to maintain immediate, intimate contact with the meat consumer, the livestock markets, and general economic conditions not only in the United States but also in foreign countries. By knowing and understanding his market, which is the source of his income, the stockman can conduct both his production and marketing operations intelligently by matching, so far as he is able, his production with probable demand with respect to both quantities and qualities.

### STANDARDS AND THE LIVESTOCK MARKETS

The meat consumer is the livestock producer's real market, but it is the trade at the livestock market that accepts his animals and sends him a check or draft. Consequently the stockman is particularly interested in the livestock market and what happens there.

The marked increase during the last few years in the number of public stockyards has worked to the advantage of the stockman, because it has brought his market nearer to him and reduced somewhat the hazards and losses involved in long shipments of live animals, but it has also complicated matters for him.

Under the old system the average stockman had little choice as to where he would dispose of his animals. To-day livestock markets are so numerous and so widely distributed that most stockmen can ship to two or more markets with almost equal facility. This has placed upon the stockman the necessity of deciding which market to patronize. To base his decision on sound considerations it is necessary for him to keep reasonably well posted on prices and trade conditions prevailing at several markets. This makes it necessary for livestock market agencies to disseminate among stockmen accurate and detailed information regarding conditions on their respective markets. Obviously the trade language used in these reports should be one which is understood by the livestock producers and one which is used and understood by all agencies at the market.

If on a given day one commission man says in his market letter that "Choice grade steers sold steady" and another commission man reports that grade of steers as 25 cents lower, the man in the country will be confused. If at the same time the market reporter reports "choice" grade steers a quarter higher, and possibly a packer buyer reports them 50 cents higher, confusion in the mind of the stockman will be doubly confounded.

Given certain circumstances, all four reports may be correct, the confusion being due to the fact that the four persons reporting the market had four different conceptions of what constituted a "choice" grade steer. Such situations are constantly occurring, and are always possible in the absence of well-established and generally accepted standards.

If there is a second market which the stockman can use, there is a probability this second market maintains still different standards for "choice" grade steers. Under such circumstances the reports will be of little, if any, use to the stockman who is trying to compare the two markets with a view to deciding to which he should ship his steers.

When, however, a definite standard for a "choice" grade steer is set up, understood, and accepted by all branches of the trade at all markets, and if the same is true of stockmen generally, the whole problem will be simplified for everyone. Each market will report on the supply, demand, and price of "choice" grade steers prevailing at that point, and any stockman, wherever located, will be able to obtain a clear picture of the situation at as many markets as he may care to study. Under such circumstances the market is able to exercise one of its important functions—that of informing the stockman as to what the market is doing.

The primary function of the market is to provide an outlet or utilization for the livestock. To accomplish this, elaborate machinery has been set up involving many agencies. Stockyard employees, commissionmen, packer-buyers, traders, speculators, slaughterers, and meat handlers all have a share in passing the livestock through the market, transforming it into dressed meat, and distributing the meat to the wholesale and retail trade. As the route is usually long and winding and the machinery is sometimes complicated, it is highly desirable to reduce to a minimum the time and effort involved. Probably nothing will contribute more to such reduction than a set of generally understood and accepted official standards.

Standardization involves developing a system of labeling in which commodities and trade units of commodities are designated by well-established and understood titles or names. Under such a system a single label may so define and identify as to eliminate the need for elaborate description or personal inspection. Under such circumstances, "prime," "choice," "good," "medium," etc., stand for certain well-defined, carefully limited things; and the mere mention of these names, with proper context, brings to the mind of one familiar with their significance definite pictures of animals, carcasses, cuts, etc. Choice grade is then "choice" grade for buyer and seller alike, regardless of supplies, demand, season, geographic location, or other considerations.



Differences of opinion regarding proper prices will always exist because price depends upon many things besides grade, but under a standardized system of grading, there will be few differences of opinion regarding the grade of an animal or carcass, and such differences can be easily settled by establishing the facts through an application of the official standards.

These differences of opinion regarding grade constitute the main problem to-day. After the sale is consummated it usually is a comparatively easy matter to learn what price a certain load of steers brought, but it is a different matter to tell the stockman in the country or a packer in a distant city just what kind of steers brought the price. It is here that universal standards and standardized grade names will assist the market and all market agencies.

### STANDARDS AND THE MARKET REPORTER

The aim of every intelligent livestock producer is to supply those things which the meat consumer requires and for which he will pay good prices. The consumer, on the other hand, usually has well-defined preferences and prejudices and expects the producer to cater to them. Under such circumstances there must be some means of communication between the two. There must be some method whereby the meat consumer can make his wants and requirements quickly and definitely known to the livestock producer and some facilities whereby the livestock producer can advise the meat consumer as to the quantities and qualities of products he has to offer.

If producer and consumer are neighbors, this is a simple matter, but when producers and consumers are separated from 500 to 3,000 miles the matter of direct and prompt communication becomes a serious problem, which becomes still more difficult when a large number of agencies and a complicated set of market machinery are interposed between producer and consumer.

Under the natural operation of economic law the livestock producer sends his stock to market and sells it for what it will bring. The consumer goes to market and buys what is offered at whatever price he is forced to pay or, if offerings are not to his liking, does not buy anything. The effects of such action on the part of the consumer eventually work back through the marketing processes and agencies and ultimately are communicated to the livestock producer, but about all the producer has in the way of information is unmistakable evidence that somehow he has made a mistake in that he has failed to meet the consumer's requirements.

He alters his procedure and tries again, but with similar results. When his stock arrives at market, trade conditions appear unfavorable, and he is forced to accept relatively low prices. Under such circumstances the producer usually is told that there is an oversupply of his kind of livestock, that the demand is limited, and his check or draft is conclusive evidence that prices are low. Again the market has shown him that he has made a mistake, but it has failed to give him the specific information which would assist in avoiding a repetition of his error.

The meat consumer in the meantime is still in need of meat and is willing to pay a relatively high price, provided he can get what he



wants. Unfortunately, he frequently finds on sale almost everything except the kind and grade of meat he requires. Consequently he either refrains from buying or buys a minimum quantity of something which does not satisfy his wants, expressing his dissatisfaction by paying a relatively low price. Such is the blind, unthinking operation of economic law unless aided and modified by conscious, intelligent effort. Nevertheless, much livestock and meat are still marketed in this way, though the disadvantages and wastefulness of such a system are great and obvious.

It is here that the market reporter enters and establishes himself as a contact agency not only between the producer and the consumer but between both of them and the various marketing agencies. The market reporter assumes responsibility for discovering what the meat consumer wants and what he does not want and for conveying that information to the livestock producer. He also undertakes to learn what the livestock producer has to sell and advises the meat consumer regarding it.

The market reporter stands midway between producer and consumer. His function is to gather from both sides of the industry all pertinent available information and to redistribute and make an exchange of such information in the shortest possible time. This he does by working at a point where supplies concentrate and demands are focused—at the market.

The two outstanding characteristics of a successful market reporter are accuracy and speed. In attaining speed, both in the collection and dissemination of information, he utilizes every known means of communication—personal observation, telephone, telegraph, radio, mails, and the press. To attain accuracy he must possess clear vision, must be capable of accurate thinking, and must exercise good judgment. All of this material and mental equipment will be of little use, however, unless he also has (1) definite grade standards and (2) a standardized trade language in which to express the standards.

In observing trades, definite standards enable the market reporter to see the animal, carcass, or cut clearly in all its essential details and to allocate it quickly to its proper place in the grade schedule; to make comparisons promptly; and finally to determine accurately whether the market is higher, lower, or steady. If his information comes from others, rather than from personal observation, he must have in mind not only definite standards, but the same standards as his informants; otherwise he will obtain an inaccurate picture of conditions.

A standardized trade language is one in which all words are carefully and sharply defined and carry definite and unchanging meanings. Such a language is equally valuable to the reporter whether he is gathering or disseminating market information. If the former, he must understand the language of his informants, and if the latter, he must use the same language as those to whom he speaks.

Given a standardized trade language, the use of a few sharply defined names or terms serves to picture accurately an animal, carcass, or trade condition, and eliminates the necessity of detailed description or explanation. Under such conditions, when the reporter states that "choice" grade yearling steers sold from \$11.75 to \$12," he conveys more accurate information than could be imparted by many

pages of description and explanation, because definite standards have been set up for steers, for yearlings, and for "choice" grade. The statement "'Choice' grade yearling steers brought \$11.75 to \$12" is put on the telegraph wires, used in telephone conversations and on the radio, or set in type, and in an incredibly short time a definite, clear-cut picture of what has happened on the market is conveyed to thousands of people who are familiar with the standards and the standardized language.

Without such sharply defined and generally accepted standards and without a standardized trade language the market reporter may still be an important agency in marketing livestock and meats, but with those aids his efficiency and the worth of his service to the industry are greatly increased.

### STANDARDS AND THE PACKER

The packer profits doubly from standards because he buys livestock and sells meat. He both buys and sells, for the most part, on the open market where, so far as standards are concerned, every man is more or less a law unto himself and everyone insists on being shown.

As a result, the packer employs highly skilled and salaried buyers on the livestock markets to select from the mass of offerings just the kind of animals he requires. When he sells the meat he ships it a thousand or more miles by rail, maintains expensive plants equipped with refrigeration, and manned by experts—all for the purpose of gratifying the buyer's demand for a personal inspection before purchase. And, whether acting as buyer or seller, the packer finds himself involved in endless discussion regarding the merits and demerits of live animals and dressed carcasses. All this is largely because the industry does not employ universal fixed standards. As a result, if one man calls a steer "choice" and another one calls it "common," both men are right or both wrong, depending upon the position one chooses to take. There is no way to determine the matter unless both agree to accept a standard unit of measurement which can be applied to the situation.

With the use of established standards much confusion and wasted effort will be eliminated. If the seller calls a steer "choice" and the packer buyer calls it "good" the facts can be quickly established, because both buyer and seller have already agreed on a definite standard for each grade. If the retail meat dealer, who wants a carcass of "choice" grade steer beef, knows that the packer uses the same standards that he does the retailer will gladly buy on specifications. If experience has shown him that he can make his needs clearly understood by the packer by merely specifying a certain class, weight, and grade, he will be glad to stay in his shop and wait on customers or work on his accounts rather than spend hours traveling across the city and inspecting long rails of carcasses to find one that will serve his purpose.

Elimination of much of the feeling of distrust and suspicion which livestock producers frequently hold toward packers and slaughterers in general, represents another way in which the packer will benefit by the use of established standards.



With well-established and generally accepted official grade standards much of the problem of relative values would be removed from the realm of personal opinion just as the problem of distance or lineal measurement has long since been removed. With definite units of measurement established, disputes are necessarily short-lived, for they can be quickly settled by a prompt application of the accepted standards to the problem.

Standards will not, of course, determine the market price of a commodity; nor can they determine what a packer should pay for a "choice" grade steer at a given market on a given day; nor what a producer should ask or receive for such a steer, for the market price of any commodity depends upon many things besides grade. Such standards will, however, make it possible quickly and definitely to ascertain the grade of the commodity and will provide a definite basis for quoting prices. Those two things alone will be of great benefit to the packer and slaughterer.

### STANDARDS AND THE RETAIL MEAT DEALER

The retail meat dealer occupies a unique position in the chain of distribution by which the producer's livestock reaches the consumer's plate. He is the man who actually delivers the goods to the ultimate consumer and collects from the consumer not only compensation for his own services and profits but all the money which is ultimately divided among all the agencies which precede him, including the livestock producer. If the sums collected by the retailer are large, they are all likely to prosper; if small, depression settles over the entire livestock and meat industry.

Because of his position in the organization he must satisfy a greater number of persons than does any other single agency. The packer or wholesale meat dealer does business with comparatively few customers, but the retailer must depend for his outlet upon hundreds and sometimes upon thousands of consumers. These consumers may represent every peculiarity in taste and every degree of intelligence. The wants of all must be satisfied.

The retailer, therefore, is a vital cog in the machine. If he functions well, pleases the consuming public, and collects a fair price for his products and services, the agencies which precede him in the chain are likely to prosper. If either his products or his services are unsatisfactory to the consumer, the latter is likely to substitute other foods for meat or refuse to pay a fair price for the meat, and every agency which has preceded him feels the effect in reduced business or curtailed profits.

For these reasons the retail meat dealer usually is interested in anything which will make his task more simple and his profits more sure. Few things will contribute more to these ends than generally accepted and used official grade standards and a standardized trade language.

Like all intermediate marketing agencies, the retail meat dealer is both a buyer and seller, and, to be successful, must conduct both operations on a high plane of efficiency and economy. Unless he is a skillful buyer he can not hope to sell at a profit, and unless he possesses merchandising ability he can not hold his customers and expand his business.



To be a successful buyer he must know his goods and be a student of markets and market trends. To be a successful merchant or distributor of goods he must understand consumer demands and be able to satisfy them. Economy in buying involves not only reasonable prices but also obtaining for the price the exact kind of goods desired with the smallest expenditure of time and effort. Economy in selling involves satisfied customers and return orders as well as obtaining a price commensurate with the service rendered. Returned goods are expensive for everyone.

In his capacity as both a buyer and a seller the retail meat dealer will benefit greatly from official standards. With well-recognized standards he can accomplish great savings in time and effort by substituting uniform specifications and use of the telephone and telegraph for the present wasteful system of personal inspection.

If the retailer knows that he and the man at the branch house down town or the packer in a distant city mean exactly the same thing when they refer to a "choice grade steer round," both retail and wholesale distributors will save much effort and time. Then if the retailer can assure the customer that without doubt he will send to the house a steak or roast from a "choice grade steer round," his relations with the consumer will be simplified and, in most instances, greatly improved.

Much of the entire business structure is based on confidence between buyer and seller. Without a reasonable degree of confidence modern business would be impossible. A widely used set of official standards will contribute largely to developing such confidence between wholesale and retail meat dealers and between retailers and meat consumers.

### STANDARDS AND THE MEAT CONSUMER

The housewife assumes responsibility for feeding the family, and it is probably safe to say that the average family is more particular about the kind and grade of meat served than about any other item of diet. It is an established fact, however, that, excepting extremes of quality, comparatively few persons are capable of differentiating between the various grades of meat at any point prior to actual consumption. It is necessary, therefore, that means be provided for protecting the consumer. When the meat is on the table it is too late to make exchanges or obtain refunds.

The experiences of the consumer and his reaction thereto have a vital bearing on the welfare of the whole livestock and meat industry. Unless he can obtain meat which, in all essential respects, comes up to his requirements and expectations, the consumer is likely to use less and less of that commodity and may eventually turn largely to other food products. From observation it seems likely that in every section of the country meat consumption is falling considerably short of its maximum possibilities largely because consumers so often find their meat purchases disappointing in that they fail to give a degree of satisfaction commensurate with their cost.

Most of this disappointment can be eliminated by the use of universal standards. The retail butcher can then assure his customers

that the meat delivered will fulfill certain familiar specifications, and the consumer will buy without fear of disappointment.

Under existing circumstances the housewife's meat shopping is too often a battle of wits. Experience has taught her that unless she exercises the utmost care she may obtain a steak or a roast which will prove disappointing. This engenders a spirit of distrust between her and the retailer and involves a needless expenditure of time and effort on the part of both.

Official grade standards represent definite degrees of tenderness, juiciness, fat, flavor, etc. With such standards in effect and generally understood the problem of the housewife and consumer will be reduced to one of deciding which grade is preferred under existing circumstances. With that decided, an order can be placed by telephone, and the consumer can feel sure it will be properly filled. If the meat received is not of the grade specified, she can invoke the official standards to prove that fact and can demand adjustments. But situations like this will seldom occur when both customer and retailer are dealing on the basis of accepted standards.

### RELATED PUBLICATIONS

Descriptions of United States standard grades for several kinds of livestock and dressed meat carcasses may be found in the following:

DAVIS, W. C., and BURGESS, J. A. MARKET CLASSES AND GRADES OF DRESSED LAMB AND MUTTON. U. S. Dept. Agr. Bul. 1470. 48 p., illus. 1927.

— and WHALIN, C. V. MARKET CLASSES AND GRADES OF DRESSED BEEF. U. S. Dept. Agr. Bul. 1246. 48 p., illus. 1924.

SLATER, D. J. MARKET CLASSES AND GRADES OF CATTLE. U. S. Dept. Agr. Bul. 1464. 88 p., illus. 1927.

— MARKET CLASSES AND GRADES OF CALVES AND VEALERS. U. S. Dept. Agr. Circ. 28, 44 p., illus. 1928.

Specifications for official United States standards for grades of several kinds of livestock and dressed meat carcasses may be found in the following:

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS. OFFICIAL UNITED STATES STANDARDS FOR GRADES OF CARCASS BEEF. U. S. Dept. Agr., Bur. Agr. Econ. Serv. and Regulat. Announc. 99, 10 p. 1926.

— OFFICIAL UNITED STATES STANDARDS FOR GRADES OF SLAUGHTER CATTLE. U. S. Dept. Agr., Bur. Agr. Econ. Serv. and Regulat. Announc. 112, 14 p., 1928.

— OFFICIAL UNITED STATES STANDARDS FOR GRADES OF VEALERS AND SLAUGHTER CALVES. U. S. Dept. Agr., Bur. Agr. Econ. Serv. and Regulat. Announc. 113, 7 p., 1928.

— OFFICIAL UNITED STATES STANDARDS FOR GRADES OF VEAL AND CALF CARCASSES. U. S. Dept. Agr., Bur. Agr. Econ. Serv. and Regulat. Announc. 114, 7 p., 1928.

Tentative grade descriptions appear in the following mimeographed documents:

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS. TENTATIVE STANDARDS FOR GRADES OF SLAUGHTER LAMBS AND EWES. 11 p. 1926. [Mimeographed.]

— TENTATIVE DESCRIPTIONS OF STANDARDS FOR GRADES OF YEARLING BEEF CARCASSES. 14 p. 1928. [Mimeographed.]

Other publications dealing with the standardization of livestock and meats are the following:

DAVIS, W. C. COMMERCIAL CUTS OF MEAT. U. S. Dept. Agr. Circ. 300, 10 p., illus. 1924. (Revised ed.)

GIBBONS, C. E. MARKET CLASSES AND GRADES OF LIVESTOCK. U. S. Dept. Agr. Bul. 1360. 48 p., illus. 1926.

— ADVANTAGES OF STANDARDS FOR LIVESTOCK AND MEATS. U. S. Dept. Agr. Miscellaneous Publication 33. 1928.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS. RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE GOVERNING THE INVESTIGATION AND CERTIFICATION OF CLASS, QUALITY (GRADE), AND CONDITION OF MEATS AND MEAT FOOD PRODUCTS. U. S. Dept. Agr., Bur. Agr. Econ. Serv. and Regulat. Announc. 98, 4 p. 1926.





